TQM and ISO 9001 Adoption at the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan

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Abstract

This case study was conducted to investigate why and how total quality management (TQM) and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9001 were adopted at the Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan (AFAB); what TQM and ISO 9001 meant to its officials and staff; and what factors affected their implementation. A survey of 17 AFAB officials and staff involved in TQM and ISO 9001 implementation and site observations were conducted from November to December 2019. The study found that TQM and ISO 9001 were adopted to comply with Administrative Order No. 161 and Executive Order No. 605 of President Gloria Arroyo, and Memorandum Circular No. 2015-1 of the Department of Budget and Management, and improve the AFAB's processes of registration, import and export and work force control. Implementation involved hiring of a consultant, conducting an orientation, constituting an ISO technical working group, training, creating a quality management system (QMS) manual, reviewing and streamlining work processes, conducting internal and external audits and management review, implementing corrective actions, and receiving an ISO 9001 certificate. To AFAB's officials and staff, TQM meant having a QMS that ensures the delivery

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of quality services to customers, while ISO 9001 meant a QMS standard or a standardization of work processes. Top management support, employee dedication and citizen's charter implementation positively affected TQM and ISO 9001 adoption. On the other hand, tight schedules, Bataan-wide expansion of the AFAB's operations, and employees' resistance to change negatively affected the adoption. The study recommends: (1) succeeding schedules that are more realistic and inclusive of the AFAB's expanded operations; and (2) a program that simultaneously minimizes resistance to change and promotes internalization of TQM and ISO 9001 concepts.

Keywords: total quality management (TQM), ISO 9001, quality management system (QMS), Authority of the Freeport Area of Bataan (AFAB), productivity and performance measurement, quality improvement program

Introduction

Total quality management is a comprehensive management methodology for ensuring that jobs and processes are carried out correctly, first time and every time (Morgan &Murgatroyd, 1994; Andres, 1996). ISO 9001, on the other hand, is an international quality management system standard that is used in demonstrating an organization's ability to provide products and services that fulfill customers' needs and expectations (ISO, 2016). TQM and ISO 9001 originated in the world of manufacturing but were subsequently adopted in the public sector.

TQM was adopted by federal, state, and local governments in the United States (Hunt, 1993) and by a prefectural government in Japan (Shizuoka Prefectural Government, 2013). In the Philippines, TQM was successfully adopted by the Naga City Government and the Malalag Municipal Government (Mariano, 2003), the Board of Investments (Mangahas & Leyesa, 2003), and the Government Service Insurance System (Constantino, 2004).

ISO 9001, on the other hand, was adopted by the University of the Philippines Institute for Small Scale Industries (Botuyan et al., 1993), the city governments of San Fernando (De Leon, 2018), Dagupan, Valenzuela, Muntinlupa, Tanauan, Calapan (De Leon, 2017a, 2017b), and Northern and Central Luzon state universities (De Leon, 2017c).

In historical perspective, TQM and ISO 9001 were parts of the evolution of productivity and performance measurement and quality improvement programs of the Philippine government. The earliest to be implemented among these programs was the Local Productivity and Performance Measurement System (LPPMS) of the then Ministry of Local Government. The LPPMS ran from 1984 to 1986 (BLGS, 2002). It was followed by the Sort, Systematize, Sweep, Standardize, and Self-Discipline (5S) of the Development Academy of the Philippines in 1986 (DAP, 2005). Then, the Department of the Interior and Local Government implemented the Citizen's Satisfaction Index System, Local Development Watch, and the Local Governance Performance Management System (LGPMS) in 2000, 2001, and 2004 respectively (BLGS, 2006).

In 2006, President Gloria Arroyo issued Administrative Order No. 161 which required national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs), and government-owned or controlled corporations (GOCCs) to have an ISO-aligned QMS (Office of the President of the Philippines, 2006). A year later, she also issued Executive Order No. 605 which mandated the adoption of ISO 9001 in all government agencies (Office of the President of the Philippines, 2007).

The executive issuances requiring ISO 9001 adoption in government agencies were soon complemented by the passage of Republic Act No. 9485 or more popularly known as the Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) in 2007, the conduct of the Report Card Survey and the spot-checking activity ARTA Watch by the Civil Service Commission in 2008 (Office of the President of the Philippines, 2014).

The Department of the Interior and Local Government implemented the Seal of Good Housekeeping from 2011 to 2013, and its enhanced version, the Seal of Good Local Governance in 2013. Since 2015, meanwhile, the Government Quality Management Committee (GQMC) required government agencies to have an ISO 9001-certified or an ISO

9001-aligned QMS for the grant of the performance-based bonus (PBB). The latest development in the evolution of productivity and performance measurement and quality improvement programs of the Philippine Government was the passage of Republic Act No. 11032 (otherwise known as the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018). Section 17 of this law mandated the establishment of the Anti-Red Tape Authority.

Resistance and complaints about TQM, ISO 9001, and similar productivity and performance measurement and quality improvement programs are expected no matter how well they are implemented. Sometimes, it is the bureaucracy and the stability associated with it that makes it difficult for TQM to be adopted in an organization (Cohen & Brand, 1993, pp. 59-61). Hence, implementors of these programs should ensure that a critical mass of acceptance is reached. Critical mass means enough of the right types of managers and employees have adopted the changes brought about by these programs (Carr & Littman, 1990).

Since TQM and ISO 9001 are foreign concepts, they must be adapted to Filipino culture and Philippine bureaucracy. Cultural change or adaptation is required for a successful or sustained TQM implementation (Unson, 1992; Andres, 1996). This process of cultural change, however, goes through several phases and requires considerable time. This was illustrated by de Guia (2000, p. 97) in the case of the Philippine National Bank.

In the case of Philippine LGUs, de Leon (2017a, 2017b, 2018) found that successful or sustained implementation of TQM and ISO 9001 requires the six key elements for TQM implementation in an organization by Besterfield et al. (2003), namely: (1) senior management commitment and the presence of a TQM driver or champion; (2) quality council; (3) role of middle managers or supervisors; (4) communication; (5) training; and (6) customer, employee, and supplier surveys. He also found that successful or sustained implementation requires consideration of and adaptation to Filipino cultural values as originally suggested by Andres (1996). Finally, he found that TQM and ISO 9001 implementation in LGUs is affected by the frequency and nature of leadership change and the nature of the local electoral process.

The six key elements for TQM implementation in an organization and the consideration of and adaptation to Filipino cultural values are also required for a successful TQM and ISO 9001 implementation in Northern and Central Luzon state universities. But implementation in these universities are not affected by the frequency and nature of leadership change because university officials have a much longer or more stable terms of office (de Leon, 2017c).

Currently, the literature is silent on the factors that affect TQM and ISO 9001 adoption in Philippine GOCCs. It is uncertain whether the six key elements for TQM implementation in an organization, consideration of and adaptation to Filipino cultural values, and the frequency and nature of leadership change that affect LGUs would also be the factors that matter in GOCCs.

Hence, this case study was conducted to investigate: (1) why and how TQM and ISO 9001 were adopted at the AFAB; (2) what TQM and ISO 9001 meant to its officials and staff; and (3) what factors affected their implementation.

The study integrated: (1) the six key elements for TQM implementation by Besterfield et al. (2003); (2) consideration of and adaptation to Filipino cultural values by Andres (1996); and (3) the frequency and nature of leadership change by de Leon (2017a, 2017b, 2018) as its conceptual framework. Figure 1 summarizes the factors that could affect the AFAB's TQM and ISO 9001 implementation.

Figure 1. Factors that could affect the AFAB's TQM and ISO 9001 implementation
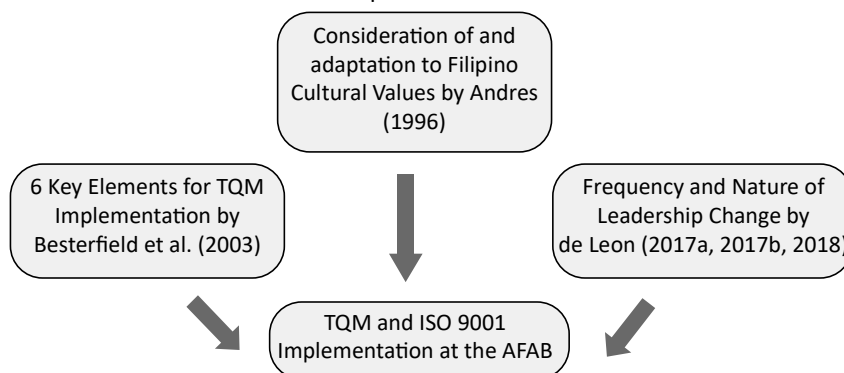
Methodology

This study's design is a case study because it allows an in-depth analysis of a program, event, activity, or process. It is bounded by time and activity and allows a variety of data collection procedures (Creswell, 2014, p. 14).

The study's unit of analysis was the AFAB. It was chosen because it is the governing body of one of the three biggest special economic zones in Central Luzon and in the Philippines (Clark and Subic being the other two). Republic Act No. 9728, which was enacted in October 2009, converted the Bataan Economic Zone (BEZ) into a special economic zone called the Freeport Area of Bataan (FAB). Prior to the BEZ, there was the Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ). Established in 1972, the BEPZ was the country's first economic zone. Its creation was mandated by Republic Act No. 5490 of 1969 (History of the Freeport Area of Bataan, n.d.).

Primary data needed by the study were obtained through a survey and site observations from November to December 2019 in the premises of the AFAB, Mariveles, Bataan. Permission to conduct data collection activities was obtained from the manager of the AFAB's Corporate Planning Department. The said official was also responsible for identifying the study's 17 survey respondents or participants. Eight of these respondents were members of the ISO technical working group (ISO TWG) while nine were process owners. These process owners belong to the offices in charge of registration, import and export, and work force control. Each of these offices had three respondents.

A questionnaire was used in the survey. It sought the respondents' socio-demographic background, the reason for AFAB's TQM and ISO 9001 adoption, the steps taken in implementing TQM and ISO 9001, the respondents' conception of TQM and ISO 9001, and the factors that affected TQM and ISO 9001 implementation.

The responses of the 17 survey participants were encoded and summarized in a spreadsheet. Thereafter, descriptions and general themes were generated based on the reading of the qualitative data collected.

Results and Discussion

The mean age of the 17 survey respondents was 40. Twelve of them are from Bataan, three from Pampanga, and two from Zambales. Twelve respondents have a master's degree while three have a bachelor's degree. Eleven hold a supervisory or managerial position while six have a staff position. All 17 respondents were directly involved in TQM and ISO 9001 implementation.

According to the 17 respondents, TQM and ISO 9001 were implemented at the AFAB in order to comply with executive issuances and to improve the processes of registration, import and export and work force control. The executive issuances were Administrative Order No. 161, Executive Order No. 605, and GQMC Memorandum Circular No. 2015-1. As a GOCC, the AFAB was required, under Administrative Order No. 161, to at least have an ISO-aligned QMS. But under Executive Order No. 605, it was required to have an ISO 9001 certification for at least one of its core processes. The AFAB exceeded this minimum requirement by seeking an ISO 9001 certification for three core processes, namely, registration, import and export, and work force control. GQMC Memorandum Circular No. 2015-1, meanwhile, required them to have an ISO 9001 certification before they could get their PBB. In short, the AFAB adopted TQM and ISO 9001 primarily to comply with executive issuances. Improvement of the work processes of registration, import and export, and work force control was only a secondary motive.

TQM and ISO 9001 adoption at the AFAB involved the following steps: (1) hiring of a consultant; (2) conducting an orientation on TQM and ISO 9001; (3) constituting an ISO technical working group; (4) training; (5) creating a QMS manual; (6) reviewing and streamlining of work processes; (7) conducting internal and external audits and management review; (8) implementing corrective actions; and (9) receiving an ISO 9001 certificate.

Much of the needed work for TQM and ISO 9001 implementation was done by the members of the ISO technical working group. Its composition and the responsibilities of each member are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Composition and responsibilities of the AFAB's
ISO technical working group

Position	Responsibility
Management Representative	Represent the AFAB Chairman in ISO meetings, and implement and maintain the ISO system
Deputy Management Representative	Assist the Management Representative in implementing and maintaining the ISO system
Documents and Records Coordinator	Coordinate overall documentation and processing of records in the AFAB
Implementation/Project Coordinator	Assist in coordinating ISO implementation tasks
Lead Auditor	Lead team members in the conduct of audits
Internal Quality Audit Team Member	Conduct audits
Departmental Coordinator	Manage and coordinate ISO implementation and maintenance within the department
Departmental Document Controller	Implement and maintain document and record control system within the department

Their QMS manual had the following parts: (1) introduction that includes scope of the manual, overview of contents, system of amendment, revision and distribution; (2) definition of terms and acronyms; (3) general information on the AFAB and selected areas of operations; (4) organizational structure, duties and responsibilities; (5) operational control and supervision; (6) operating procedures; (7) control of records and documents; and (8) appendices.

Among the eight parts of the QMS manual, operating procedures (part 6) was considered by the respondents as the most important. This is because it describes the step-by-step procedures and work instructions in narrative form with accompanying activity flow charts. It is assumed that when these standard procedures are followed, employees will be able to turn in quality service that will solicit satisfaction or even delight from customers. The use of the manual prompted the offices in charge of registration, import and export, and work force control to review and streamline their work processes. Again, the goal was to satisfy or delight customers.

To the eight members of the ISO technical working group and the heads of the offices of registration, import and export, and work force control, TQM meant having a QMS that ensures the delivery of quality services to customers, while ISO 9001 meant a QMS standard or a standardization of work processes. To the six staff members of the said offices, however, TQM and ISO 9001 seemed synonymous. They could not make a distinction between the two concepts. Hence, there is a need to clarify these two intertwined concepts. According to Morgan & Murgatroyd (1994) and Andres (1996), TQM is a comprehensive management methodology for ensuring that jobs and processes are carried out correctly, first time and every time. ISO 9001, on the other hand, is an international QMS standard that is used in demonstrating an organization's ability to provide products and services that fulfill customers' needs and expectations (ISO, 2016). But somehow, the ISO technical working group members and office supervisors were able to capture the key word for each concept: QMS for TQM; standardization for ISO 9001.

According to the 17 respondents, top management support and employee dedication positively affected their TQM and ISO 9001 implementation. The eight respondents who belong to the ISO technical working group were grateful for the leadership and support of the AFAB Chairman. The Chairman committed funds for their TQM and ISO 9001 adoption and constituted their ISO technical working group. He and the Corporate Planning Department Manager were considered by the respondents as their TQM and ISO 9001 drivers or champions.

The site observations in November and December 2019 revealed that the TQM and ISO 9001 adoption at the AFAB was complemented by the implementation of their citizen's charter. Hence, the AFAB is compliant with Republic Act No. 9485 (otherwise known as the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007) and Republic Act No. 11032 (otherwise known as the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018). Their citizen's charter is posted on the wall of their main lobby and on the flat television screen of their offices in charge of registration, import and export, and work force control. Citizen's charter implementation can be considered as another positive factor affecting the AFAB's TQM and ISO 9001 adoption.

Tight schedules, Bataan-wide expansion of the AFAB's operations, and employees' resistance to change, meanwhile, were identified by the respondents as the factors that negatively affected their TQM and ISO 9001 implementation. According to the members of the ISO technical working group, they received GQMC Memorandum Circular No. 2015-1 on August 12, 2015. They spent the whole month of September 2015 for orientation and trainings. Then, they were given only three months (October-December 2015) to produce the QMS manual. The manual was approved by the AFAB Board of Directors on January 15, 2016. In February 2016, they started using the manual and reviewing and streamlining work processes. By December 2016, they had their external audit. On May 4, 2017, they finally received their ISO 9001:2015 certificate from TUV Rheinland Philippines Incorporated. This certificate was valid from May 4, 2015 to May 3, 2020. The certifying body conducted follow-up audits on March 19, 2018 and on March 19, 2019. They felt that these TQM and ISO 9001 schedules were tight given the routine work deadlines that they also had to meet in their respective offices. Their problem with the schedules was compounded by the Bataan-wide expansion of the AFAB's operations. The GOCC now coordinates all industrial activities in the 11 towns and one component city of Bataan.

Because of their tight schedules and expanded functions, the nine process owners and five ISO technical working group members thought that TQM and ISO 9001 adoption was only an added burden to them. Hence, they resisted the program. A process owner from the office in charge of import and export operations strongly articulated her resistance to the program:

> *Ayaw ko talaga sa TQM at ISO na iyan. Dagdag trabaho lang siya. Wala lang kaming choice. Hindi raw kami makakatanggap ng PBB kapag hindi naging ISO-certified ang AFAB.* (I really do not like that TQM and ISO. They are just added work. But we have no choice. We will not be receiving a PBB if AFAB is not ISO-certified.)

The Corporate Planning Department Manager who is also the AFAB's Management Representative explained that some employees resisted the TQM and ISO 9001 implementation because they did not want to deviate from their regular work routines. They also did not like

working with the staff of the other departments or they are not used to the cross-functional requirements of TQM and ISO 9001. These explanations are consistent with Cohen & Brand's (1993) observation that because of the stability and convenience of established work routines, there is a tendency for the employees of bureaucratic or governmental organizations to resist change. It is also possible that TQM and ISO 9001 are being resisted at the AFAB because what Carr & Littman (1990) called critical mass of acceptance (enough number of the right types of managers and staff) has not been reached yet.

Three process owners, meanwhile, considered themselves passive instead of being resistant to TQM and ISO 9001. They remain passive because they are: (1) too shy to suggest solutions to workplace problems; (2) afraid that their suggestions would only be rejected by their supervisors; and (3) embarrassed if their suggestions were rejected by their superiors. A process owner from the office in charge of work force control explained in her own words:

> *Nahihiya kasi ako mag-suggest ng solutions sa mga problema naming sa trabaho. Natatakot din ako na baka ma-reject lang ng supervisor ko yung suggestion ko at mapahiya lang ako.* (I am shy to suggest solutions to our problems at the work place. I am also afraid that my suggestion would only be rejected by my supervisor and I would be embarrassed.)

Employees are not devoid of feelings and values. In order for TQM and ISO 9001 to be acceptable and successful, these feelings and values have to be considered by the implementors of the program. According to Andres (1996), Filipino culture can be considered and adapted to TQM and ISO 9001. For instance, kahiyaan or hiya can be used to guarantee quality output or service from employees. Employees have amor propio (self-esteem or self-respect) and they do not want to turn in defective output or poor service. Supervisors and implementors of TQM and ISO 9001 can also be more encouraging and appreciative of their employees so that will not be too shy to suggest solutions to workplace problems.

Conclusions

TQM and ISO 9001 were implemented at the AFAB to comply with executive issuances, namely, Administrative Order No. 161, Executive Order No. 605, and GQMC Memorandum Circular No. 2015-1, and improve the processes of registration, import and export, and work force control. Implementation of TQM and ISO 9001 involved: (1) hiring of a consultant; (2) conducting an orientation on TQM and ISO 9001; (3) constituting an ISO technical working group; (4) training; (5) creating a QMS manual; (6) reviewing and streamlining of work processes; (7) conducting internal and external audits and management review; (8) implementing corrective actions; and (9) receiving an ISO 9001 certificate. To AFAB's officials and staff, TQM meant having a QMS that ensures the delivery of quality services to customers, while ISO 9001 meant a QMS standard or a standardization of work processes. Top management support, employee dedication, and citizen's charter implementation positively affected TQM and ISO 9001 adoption. On the other hand, tight schedules, Bataan-wide expansion of the AFAB's operations, and employees' resistance to change negatively affected the adoption.

Among Besterfield et al.'s (2003) six key elements of TQM implementation in an organization, senior management commitment and the presence of a TQM driver or champion were the most important to AFAB employees. Without the leadership and support of the AFAB Chairman and the Corporate Planning Department Manager, TQM and ISO 9001 would not have been implemented successfully. Three more elements of TQM implementation, however, were also present at the AFAB: (1) the quality council as personified by the ISO technical working group; (2) the role of middle managers or supervisors of the offices in charge of registration, import and export, and work force control; and (3) training which was conducted by the consultant and ISO technical working group. The elements of communication and customer, employee, and supplier surveys, however, were less emphasized at the AFAB. Survey forms are collected and processed every month. The results are discussed in the meetings of the management and the ISO technical working group.

Andres' (1996) argument that successful TQM implementation requires consideration of and adaptation to Filipino cultural values

was validated in this case study. Some AFAB process owners were too shy to suggest solutions to workplace problems for fear of being rejected and embarrassed by their superiors. This was expected or understandable because they are mindful of their amor propio (self-esteem or self-respect).

Finally, the frequency and nature of leadership change which de Leon (2017a, 2017b, 2018) found significant to LGUs seem unimportant to the AFAB. GOCC officials are appointed by the President of the Philippines and their terms of office are generally not disrupted by local and national elections. They also tend to have longer terms of office as compared to LGU officials. The current AFAB Chairman was appointed by the President in 2016 upon the recommendation of the Bataan Governor. Considering this, the study's framework is revised and presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Factors affecting the AFAB's TQM and ISO 9001 implementation
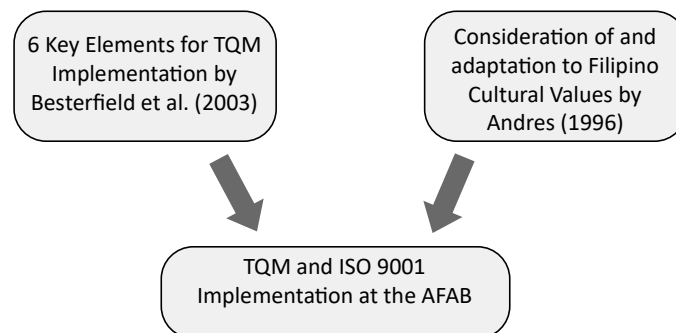
Recommendations

When setting succeeding schedules related to TQM and ISO 9001, implementors should take into account the employees' deadlines for work output in their respective offices or departments. They should make future schedules more realistic and inclusive of the AFAB's expanded operations to the rest of the province. When this is done, employees will less likely think and feel that TQM and ISO 9001 activities are just additional work for them. This will greatly help in minimizing resistance to the program.

To further minimize resistance among employees, AFAB's top management should institute a program that will promote internalization of TQM and ISO 9001 concepts. The key feature of this program is giving recognition and awards to quality circles or groups of employees who have successfully solved work place problems or implemented work improvement projects. When they receive recognition and awards for their initiatives, they will soon realize that TQM and ISO 9001 adoption is beneficial to them and they will feel empowered. This has already been demonstrated at the Shizuoka Prefectural Government in 2013. It can also be done in Philippines NGAs, LGUs, and GOCCs.

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